

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 24 as set forth below (a marked-up version is attached hereto):

1. **(amended)** An isolated polarizing optical beam splitter/combiner for combining orthogonally polarized beams of light into a single port in a combining direction, or for splitting a beam of light into orthogonally polarized beams of light to spatially separated ports in a splitting direction comprising:

a single port for launching a beam of light into the splitter/combiner, or for outputting a combined beam of light from the splitter/combiner;

a pair of spaced apart ports for launching orthogonally polarized beams of light into the splitter/combiner, or for outputting orthogonally polarized beams of light from the splitter/combiner;

a first polarization beam splitter optically coupled to the single port, oriented to provide different optical paths for two orthogonally polarized beams of light;

a second polarization dependent beam steering means optically coupled to the pair of spaced apart ports, oriented to provide different optical paths for two orthogonally polarized beams of light;

a non-reciprocal rotator between the first polarization beam splitter element and at least an element of the second polarization dependent beam steering means for rotating a polarization of each of two orthogonal beams of light and maintaining the orthogonal relationship between them, said non-reciprocal rotator adapted to be driven for transmission in a selected combining direction or a splitting direction,

wherein, when driven in the combining direction, the non-reciprocal rotator permits light to propagate from the pair of ports simultaneously to the single port, and prevents light from coupling between the single port and the pair of ports, or

wherein, when driven in the splitting direction, the non-reciprocal rotator permits light to propagate from the single port simultaneously to the pair of ports, and prevents light from coupling between the pair of ports and the single port.

24. **(amended)** An isolated polarizing optical beam splitter/combiner for combining orthogonally polarized beams of light into a single beam of light in a combiner mode of operation, and for

splitting a beam of light into orthogonally polarized beams of light in a splitter mode of operation comprising:

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a first birefringent crystal having different optical paths for light of orthogonal polarizations converging at a single first port for combining orthogonally polarized beams of light in the combiner mode, or diverging from the single first port for splitting orthogonal beams of light from a beam of light in the splitter mode and having a rotational axis;

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a second birefringent crystal having different optical paths for light of orthogonal polarizations converging from a second and a third spaced apart ports for reducing a spatial separation between two co-propagating orthogonal beams of light in the combiner mode, or diverging to the second and third spaced apart ports for spatially separating co-propagating orthogonal beams of light split by the first birefringent element in the splitter mode and having a rotational axis;

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a non-reciprocal polarization rotator disposed between the first and second birefringent crystals for rotating the polarization of orthogonally polarized beams of light to a first state in a transmission direction for optically coupling the first port to the second and third ports, and for rotating the polarization of orthogonally polarized beams of light to a second state in an isolation direction which does not permit coupling between the first port and the second and third ports.

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